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RIO+20
United Nations Conference
on Sustainable Development

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Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
20-22 June 2012

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Organization of work, including the establishment of subsidiary bodies, and other organizational matters

Organizational and procedural matters

Note by the Secretariat

1. The proposals set out in the present note have been prepared on the basis of General Assembly resolution 66/197, entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development".

I. Election of officers

2. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development shall elect a President and other officers in accordance with its rules of procedure.

II. Adoption of the rules of procedure

3. In accordance with the proposed organization of work (see General Assembly resolution 66/197, annex II), the Conference shall adopt its rules of procedure at the formal opening plenary meeting to be held during the morning of Wednesday, 20 June.

III. Adoption of the agenda

4. The Conference will have before it for adoption the provisional agenda (A/CONF.216/1), as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/197.

* A/CONF.216/1.

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IV. Organization of work

A. Dates and venue

5. The Conference will be held at the Riocentro Exhibition and Convention Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012.

B. Allocation of items

6. In accordance with the proposed organization of work (see General Assembly resolution 66/197, annex II), it is proposed that the Conference organize its work around six high-level plenary meetings and four high-level round tables. It is proposed that items 1 to 9 and 11 and 12 of the provisional agenda be considered in plenary meetings, and that item 10 (Outcome of the Conference) be allocated to the Main Committee, if established in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

C. Plenary meetings

7. It is proposed that the Conference consist of six plenary meetings, as follows:

Wednesday, 20 June 2012: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Thursday, 21 June 2012: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Friday, 22 June 2012: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Evening sessions may be held, if required. All plenary meetings will be held at Riocentro.

8. The list of speakers for the plenary meetings will be established by the drawing of lots, in accordance with the customary protocol that ensures that Heads of States or Government speak first, followed by other heads of delegation. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/197, the Holy See, in its capacity as observer State, Palestine, in its capacity as observer, and the European Union, in its capacity as observer, will be included in the list of speakers. It is proposed that a time limit of five minutes be established for each oral statement. The list of speakers will be announced in the daily Journal of the Conference.

9. The formal opening plenary meeting, to be held during the morning of Wednesday, 20 June, will consider all procedural ar ' organizational matters, including the adoption of the rules of procedure and of the agenda, the election of the President of the Conference, the election of officers, the establishment of a Main Committee, the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee and arrangements for the preparation of the report of the Conference, and other matters. The plenary meeting will also hear statements from the President of the Economic and Social Council and the nine major groups.

10. At the ceremonial opening of the Conference, which will be held on Wednesday, 20 June during the afternoon plenary meeting, statements will be made by the President of the Conference, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Conference.

11. The closing plenary meeting, to be held during the afternoon of Friday, 22 June, is proposed to conclude with the presentation of the summaries by the Rapporteurs of the high-level round tables and the adoption of the outcome document and the report of the Conference.

D. High-level round tables

12. It is proposed that the Conference will hold four high-level round tables in parallel with the plenary meetings, as follows:

Wednesday, 20 June 2012: from 4.30 to 7.30 p.m.

Thursday, 21 June 2012: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Friday, 22 June 2012: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

13. It is proposed that the round tables be held under the common theme "Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference".

14. Each high-level round table will have two Co-Chairs and a Rapporteur, to be appointed by the President of the Conference from among the Heads of State or Government and ministers attending the Conference, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and taking into account invitations for nominations to be extended to the Chairs of regional groups.

15. The outcomes of the round tables should be reflected in the summaries by the Rapporteurs, which should be submitted to the closing plenary meeting of the Conference and included in the final report of the Conference.

16. The four round tables will be interactive and multi-stakeholder in nature, with 70 seats each: up to 50 for Government delegations and at least 20 for other participants, including representatives of observers, entities of the United Nations system and other accredited intergovernmental organizations and major groups. Member States and other participants are encouraged to be represented at the round tables at the highest possible level. Participants will be invited by the Secretariat to sign up for participation in one of the round tables in advance of the Conference, bearing in mind the total number of participants outlined above.

17. Any given State, observer, entity of the United Nations system or other accredited intergovernmental organization or representative of a major group may participate in only one of the round tables. Each participant may be accompanied by one adviser.

18. The list of participants in each round table will be made available prior to the meeting.

19. The proceedings of the round tables will be telecast in an "overflow room", which will be open to the media and all other accredited participants.

E. Establishment of a Main Committee

20. A Main Committee, if established in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference, will meet, if necessary, in parallel with plenary meetings except during the opening and closing meetings. The Main Committee would be seized with finalizing any outstanding matters.

F. Timetable for the work of the Conference

21. A proposed timetable for the work of the Conference is contained in the annex to the present note. Updated information will be posted on the Conference website (www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/) and announced in the daily Journal of the Conference.

G. Organization of meetings

22. The resources available to the Conference allow for a maximum of three simultaneous meetings in the morning and three in the afternoon, with interpretation facilities, including committees, round tables, working groups and informal consultations. Interpretation facilities can be provided to regional or interest group meetings only when they are held in place of formal meetings or if those facilities are otherwise available.

V. Credentials of representatives to the Conference: appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

23. A Credentials Committee shall be appointed according to the rules of procedure of the Conference.

VI. Participants

24. Participation of Member States, observers, institutional stakeholders and major groups will be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

VII. Secretariat

25. The Secretary-General of the Conference serves as focal point within the Secretariat of the United Nations for providing support to the organization of the Conference, in cooperation with the host country authorities. In May 2010, the Secretary-General of the United Nations nominated the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as the Secretary-General of the Conference.

VIII. Documentation/paper-smart

26. In accordance with the practice followed at previous United Nations conferences, the official documentation of the Conference will include documents issued before, during and after the Conference.

27. In accordance with the practice followed at previous United Nations conferences, it is recommended that the report of the Conference consist of the decisions of the Conference, a brief account of the proceedings and a reportorial account of the work of the Conference and the action taken at the plenary meetings.

28. Summaries of the plenary meetings and high-level round-table discussions should also be included in the report of the Conference.

29. The Conference will be serviced as a paper-smart meeting through the Integrated Sustainable PaperSmart Services portal (http://papersmart.un.org). The official documentation of the Conference will be issued digitally at the conference site in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

IX. Organization of parallel meetings and other events of the Conference

30. Parallel meetings and other events, including a partnership forum and learning centres, will be held during the same hours as the plenary meetings and the round tables, if they are held in the main building. The partnership forum and learning centres will constitute an official part of the Conference. Interpretation for such meetings will be provided on an as-available basis.

31. Special events, including briefings, seminars, workshops and panel discussions on issues related to sustainable development, will be organized by Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and accredited institutional and non-institutional stakeholders for the benefit of the participants in the Conference. Guidelines for organizing special events and the calendar of those events will be made available on the Conference website.

X. Media coverage

32. Press material will be prepared by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat for journalists covering the Conference. In addition, regular press releases will be issued on the results of plenary meetings, round tables and other events. All relevant documentation will be made available electronically at the Conference website.

33. The plenary meetings and round tables, as well as press conferences, will be broadcast live in the media area. A programme of special media briefings and press conferences will be announced.

Annex

Proposed timetable for the work of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 20-22 June 2012

Date/time	*Agenda item/programme*	
Wednesday, 20 June		
Opening plenary meeting		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	1	Opening of the Conference
	2	Election of the President
	3	Adoption of the rules of procedure
	4	Adoption of the agenda of the Conference
	5	Election of officers other than the President
	6	Organization of work, including the establishment of subsidiary bodies, and other organizational matters
	7	Credentials of representatives to the Conference
	7 (a)	Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee
	7 (b)	Report of the Credentials Committee
	1	Opening statements
		Statements from the President of the Economic and Social Council and the nine major groups
	8	General debate
		Statements by Heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegation
Plenary meeting		
3-6 p.m.	1	Ceremonial opening of the Conference
		Statements by the President of the Conference, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Conference
	8	General debate
		Statements by Heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegation
Round table		
4.30-7.30 p.m.		Round table 1: Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference

Date/time	*Agenda item/programme*	
Thursday, 21 June		
Plenary meeting		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	8	General debate
		Statements by Heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegation
Round table		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.		Round table 2: Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference
Plenary meeting		
3-6 p.m.	8	General debate
		Statements by Heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegation
Round table		
3-6 p.m.		Round table 3: Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference
Friday, 22 June		
Plenary meeting		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	8	General debate
		Statements by Heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegation
Round table		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.		Round table 4: Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference
Closing plenary meeting		
3-6 p.m.	8	General debate
		Statements by Heads of State or Government, ministers and heads of delegation
	9	Reports of the round tables
	10	Adoption of the outcome document
	11	Adoption of the report of the Conference
	12	Closure of the Conference

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United Nations Conference
on Sustainable Development

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Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
20-22 June 2012

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*
Reports of the round tables

Background note for round tables of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference"

I. Overview

1. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) has a mandate to achieve renewed political commitment for sustainable development, reflecting the urgency of pursuing sustainable development in ways that will be outlined in the outcome document. The challenges are daunting. The past few years have been marked by the impacts of and responses to the global financial and economic crisis and deepening social inequities, both of which continue to unfold. Moreover, the crisis has combined with significant volatility in food and energy prices, increased pressures on urban areas and depletion of marine resources, and the intensifying impacts of climate change have led to increased vulnerability of all people, especially the poor.

2. The Conference is a call to action for the international community. We remain guided by the seminal documents signed at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[1] and Agenda 21,[2] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[3] agreed to at Johannesburg in 2002. What we have lacked until now is firm commitment to the action, implementation, development cooperation and partnerships that sustainable development requires in order to achieve progress on the ground on a scale that matches the seriousness of the challenges. The indication of participation by so

* A/CONF.216/1.

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

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many of the world's leaders at this Conference suggests that world leaders have recognized the urgency of renewing their political commitment. Now the central question we must ask ourselves is: when we go home to our capitals, what will be the impact of the outcome of the Conference on actions at all levels? How will we depart decisively from "business as usual"?

3. The Conference is expected to give us guidance on goals, tools, institutional reforms, technological cooperation and other means of implementation designed to set us firmly on a sustainable development path. It is time to reflect on how to move forward in each of these areas.

II. Sustainable development goals

4. A major outcome of the Conference is expected to be the decision to develop sustainable development goals. Such goals will help situate the Millennium Development Goals, to which the international community remains firmly committed, within a sustainable development framework. We know, however, that even if all countries should succeed in this regard, the challenges regarding poverty eradication and social development will remain. So too will the challenges for all countries of making economies sustainable, including through more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. Situating the post-2015 agenda in a sustainable development framework, including through the elaboration of sustainable development goals, would bear testimony to the elevated importance attached by Governments to sustainable development, which is indeed one of the expected legacies of the Conference.

Questions on sustainable development goals

5. The questions might include:

(a) How should the goals be defined in order for them to enjoy both universal acceptance and country ownership, relevant to national priorities?

(b) What should a short list of sustainable development goals include?

(c) How can we ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is a unified and sustainable one?

(d) How best can the international community support and assess progress towards agreed goals?

(e) How best can we ensure a process to elaborate a post-2015 development agenda that is transparent and reflective of the views of all stakeholders everywhere?

III. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

6. Green economy policies are generally understood as a tool to advance sustainable development and poverty eradication, providing a range of policy options that contribute to the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. Each country will choose its own green economy approach and policy mix, assessing national priorities and adapting measures to national institutions and

economic systems. The challenge will be to devise policies that sustain economic and social development while diminishing stresses on the environment and natural resources. The policy and incentive framework will be crucial to promote investment in development and the deployment of environmentally sound technologies.

7. Many countries are at an early stage of implementing green economy policies, though some are more advanced than others, including a number of developing countries. Much innovation is happening at the local and national levels, and networking and experience-sharing among local and national entities can also be valuable. International and regional initiatives that support capacity-building, networking, knowledge-sharing and partnerships will be invaluable and the United Nations system can play an important role in this regard. The mobilization of financial resources will also be crucial to support green economy policies and, in that regard, the international financial institutions, bilateral donors, the private sector and public-private partnerships all have important contributions to make.

Questions on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

8. The questions might include:

(a) What capabilities and assistance will national Governments require in designing and implementing green economy policies in accordance with their own national circumstances and priorities?

(b) In what ways can the international community best support efforts of countries in designing and implementing green economy policies?

IV. Institutional framework for sustainable development

9. The discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development highlight the need for effective integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. They also point to the deficiencies in international sustainable development governance since the World Summit on Sustainable Development. At the same time, discussions around international environmental governance have highlighted the fragmentation and relative weakness of the environmental pillar.

10. Proposals for strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development have identified key functions that a strengthened framework should deliver in a balanced manner:

(a) Advocating for sustainable development and setting the agenda for the future, thus providing political guidance on filling gaps and addressing emerging challenges;

(b) Reviewing progress in the implementation of commitments, including in providing support for sustainable development in developing countries;

(c) Sharing experiences and lessons learned;

(d) Promoting the participation of civil society and facilitating partnerships;

(e) Strengthening the science-policy interface.

Questions on the institutional framework for sustainable development

11. The questions might include:

(a) How can a new intergovernmental body on sustainable development be supported in securing effective high-level political engagement and follow-up of the sustainable development agenda, including the outcomes of the Conference, such as sustainable development goals?

(b) How can institutions at the local, national and regional levels more effectively integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development?

(c) How can the strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme, one of the expected outcomes to be agreed at the Conference, be implemented in a way that lives up to Member States' expectations for a more effective environmental pillar?

(d) How can the institutional framework best enable the participation of civil society?

V. Financial resources, technology and capacity-building

12. Financing the critical investments in infrastructure and new production methods and capacities is an important challenge faced by developing countries aiming to build or transition to green economies on the path to sustainable development. Mobilizing a combination of domestic and international, public and private resources will be necessary for needed investments to eradicate poverty and achieve social and economic development that also yields environmental benefits. A policy environment that encourages a shift towards more efficient and environmentally sound production, transport and distribution systems will be crucial in this regard, as will continued financial support to developing countries from the international community and international financial institutions, particularly for the least developed countries.

13. Progress in science and technology and their application is essential for advancing towards sustainable development. Technology has greatly shaped society and the environment. It has addressed many problems but also added new ones. In order to plan for an effective implementation of the outcome of the Conference, it is important to recognize the potential contributions of science and technology, including through strengthened international collaboration in technology transfer and dissemination.

14. Technological innovation will need to be accelerated in coming years if we are to address effectively the sustainable development challenges facing the international community and national Governments. Technology will be only part of the response to such challenges, but without innovation, an effective response seems highly implausible. In principle, it should be technically feasible to increase global efficiency in the use of energy and materials several-fold by mid-century, but this will require major changes in policies, institutions and incentives.

15. The encouraging news is that technological innovation is happening in more and more countries, including developing countries. Thus, alongside enhanced North-South technological cooperation, strengthened South-South and triangular

cooperation will become increasingly important in technological cooperation for sustainable development.

16. Gaining affordable access to environmentally sound technologies while ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights is only part of the challenge facing developing countries aiming to build green economies on the path to sustainable development. Capacity limitations continue to hamper the efforts of developing countries, in particular, to achieve a more effective integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. In this regard, capacity-building efforts and mechanisms will need to remove existing constraints, whether in the areas of policy design and implementation, institutional effectiveness, technology deployment, development, transfer and management of infrastructure and productive capacity, or financial resource mobilization and utilization. The follow-up to the Conference provides a golden opportunity for the international community to strengthen, streamline and render more effective capacity-building support to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in the pursuit of sustainable development and the attainment of sustainable development goals.

Questions on technology cooperation and other means of implementation

17. The questions might include:

(a) What new approaches can we deploy to mobilize and direct the financial resources, including official development assistance, that countries will need to invest in green economy policies and move more decisively towards sustainable development?

(b) How can we ensure that efforts in the fields of science and technology result in a significant increase in global energy and resource efficiency in the coming decades?

(c) How can we foster broad access to environmentally sound technologies, including in developing countries and the least developed countries?

(d) How can we enhance international technological cooperation on the development, deployment and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including in developing countries?

(e) What can be done by the international community to strengthen and target more effectively its capacity-building support for building inclusive green economies and achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication?